

REMARKS

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 14-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claims 14-16 and 29-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 2000351018. Claim 17 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of base and intervening claims. Claims 18-28 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants traverse each objection and rejection.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 14, 17-18, 21-22 and 29 will have been amended. The herein-contained amendments should not be considered an indication of Applicants' acquiescence as to the propriety of any outstanding rejection or objection. Rather, Applicants have amended the claims in order to advance prosecution and obtain early allowance of claims in the present application.

Applicants traverse the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In this regard, the herein-contained amendments eliminate noted informalities in the amended claims, and generally clarify the features of the invention to which the pending claims are directed. Each claim now pending is believed allowable under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Applicants note that the amended independent claims incorporate elements previously passively recited in the preamble (lines 1-4) as "wherein" clauses in the body of the claims. The features positively recited in the bodies of claims are the elements of the claimed invention, and elements in the "wherein" clauses are contextual requirements for the environment in which the claimed invention is used. Accordingly, elements of the claimed invention are positively recited in the bodies of claims.

Additionally, the amended claims properly introduce a "lateral direction". A "lateral direction" in each claim would be understood as a direction transverse to a direction of gravity.

The amended claims also eliminate the phrase “stabilize positioning and processing operations,” as these operations are not subsequently referenced in the claims and the elimination therefore enhances clarity in the claimed combinations.

Applicants additionally note that “edges” are properly introduced in the claims, and would be understood as an inherent characteristic of some workpieces by one of ordinary skill in the art. Edges of workpieces are exhaustively explained in the specification and shown in the various Figures.

Applicants further note that a “shape” of the workpiece is properly introduced in the claims, and would be understood as an inherent characteristic of a workpiece by one of ordinary skill in the art. As noted above, edges of workpieces are exhaustively explained in the specification and shown in the various Figures, and a shape of the workpiece would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art reviewing Applicants’ specification, at least in view of the descriptions of edges of workpieces and related features in Applicants’ specification.

The amended claims also recite “when the workpiece is to be bent”. The term “shape of the workpiece when the workpiece is to be bent” is properly introduced and would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art reviewing Applicants’ specification.

Moreover, “positioning points”, “points of the selected edges”, “positions of the abutments” and “an intermediate point in the lateral direction between positions of the abutments” are all properly introduced in the claims, and are each clear on their face, and would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art reviewing Applicants’ specification.

Moreover, the alternative recitation in claim 16 is tolerated in U.S. practice, and the remarks in the Office Action are not understood as stating a proper basis for objection to this claim.

Finally, claim 17 is a dependent claim, and is not required to introduce a new “complete and operative device” to the “bending apparatus” of underlying claims 14 and 16. Further, a

“driving mechanism” specified in claim 17 would provide a motive force for the transfer mechanism to operate, but a motive force would not be properly introduced as a positive element of an apparatus claim.

At least in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is respectfully requested.

Applicants traverse the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102. In this regard, JP 2000351018, was submitted in an Information Disclosure Statement along with an English language Abstract, and is also described/characterized at pages 1-2 of the present application. In the Abstract and at pages 1-2 of the present application, JP 2000351018 is described as disclosing that a foot switch or two-hand switch can be moved to a point in front of a predetermined processing station, or to a point in front of a center point of back-ends of a workpiece against which abutments are abutted. JP2000351018 is described at page 2 of the present application as not enabling movement to a point in front of a bending line when the bending line is at an end part (extremity) in the lateral direction. JP 2000351018 does not disclose features relating to selecting edges of a workpiece and moving a ram start-up device to points corresponding to points of the selected edges. JP 20003510018 also does not disclose features relating to determining a point of an abutment in a lateral direction based on a bending sequence in which the workpiece is to be bent, at least one of a punch a die used to bend the workpiece, and a tool layout of the at least one of the punch and die decided by a worker according to product information, and then a point where ram start-up device is actually positioned... based on the determined point of the abutment in the lateral direction. Accordingly, features of claims 14-16 and 29-30 are not disclosed by JP 2000350108, and claims 14-16 and 29-30 are therefore allowable under 35 U.S.C. §102 over JP 2000351018.

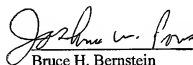
As set forth above, each of the claims now pending is allowable under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and under 35 U.S.C. §102. That is, the amended claims are not indefinite

under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and no claim is properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 over JP 2000351018.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and objections is respectfully requested, along with an indication of the allowability of each claim pending herein.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,  
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